

WILLITS BYPASS PROJECT



California Department of Transportation
October 30, 2003

GREAT TURNOUT AT THE OPEN HOUSE MEETING

Thank you to those that attended the open house meeting for the Willits Bypass Project on September 18 at Willits City Hall. We were glad to have the opportunity to show the community the modifications to Alternative J1T that were developed to avoid adverse effects to community resources and to minimize wetland impacts. These modifications were developed with considerable input from interested members of the public, landowners, local partner agencies, and federal resource agencies. We value your input, and any verbal or written comments you provided at the open house will be taken into consideration as we evaluate the modified Alternative J1T.



Members of the public, landowners, local partner agencies, and federal resource agencies attended the meeting.

ABOUT THE BYPASS PROJECT

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) and Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) propose to construct a new segment of U.S. 101 that will bypass the City of Willits. The project will reduce delays, improve safety and improve level of service.



Project Manager, Lena Ashley, discusses the bypass project in depth.

WHAT'S NEXT?

The next step is to select a preferred alternative.

The alternative selected for construction must be the least damaging of all the alternatives to aquatic resources (wetlands). We are working with our local, state and federal partners to reach agreement on the Least Environmentally Damaging Practicable Alternative (LEDPA). When a LEDPA is identified, Caltrans will move forward with the Final EIS/EIR, which will include responses to comments received from the public. We plan to release the Final EIS/EIR in the fall/winter of 2004.

EVOLUTION OF MODIFIED ALTERNATIVE J1T

Resource agencies reached informal concurrence with Caltrans/FHWA analysis that Alternatives E3, C1T and L/C do not meet LEDPA criteria. The two alternatives that are currently under consideration are:

- Alternative LT
- Alternative J1T

Alternative LT impacts 72 acres of wetland (20 more acres than J1T), and has impacts to riparian woodland, farmland and habitat fragmentation. However, J1T has greater potential to impact

community resources, specifically, the San Hedrin Industrial Park and the recreation/museum complex on Commercial Street. To reach agreement on the LEDPA, the team developed preliminary mapping of a Modified Alternative J1T that avoids both the industrial park and the recreation/museum complex and that may have fewer wetland impacts than LT.





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WILLITS BYPASS PROJECT
P.O. BOX 3700
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Willits Bypass Project



WHAT ARE WE DOING OVER THE NEXT SEVERAL MONTHS?

Caltrans will be conducting detailed studies of the Modified Alternative J1T to determine resource impacts such as the amount of wetland impacts. The Modified Alternative J1T will be evaluated for adequacy, safety, and constructability. If new significant environmental effects are disclosed or if a substantial increase in the severity of previously identified effects; or if new information of substantial importance that Caltrans did not know or could not have known at the time the previous EIS/EIR was circulated, then pursuant to CEQA/NEPA Caltrans would recirculate the environmental document. A decision on recirculation of the Draft EIS/EIR will not be made until all technical studies are completed and if the Modified Alternative J1T is selected as the LEDPA.

HOW TO CONTACT US

Caltrans staff and the Project Development Team continue to work hard to determine the LEDPA/ preferred alternative. If you would like to learn more about this project or to be placed on the project mailing list, please call the Project Manager, Lena Ashley at (707) 441-5795 or Cher Daniels, Senior Environmental Manager at (916) 274-0568.

NEW

Visit our *updated* Willits Bypass website:

[http://www.dot.ca.gov/dist1/d1projects/willits/index.
htm](http://www.dot.ca.gov/dist1/d1projects/willits/index.htm)